

May 4, 2004

SCHAKOWSKY COMMEMORATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CENTRO ROMERO

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today commemorated the 20th anniversary of Centro Romero. Below is Schakowsky's Congressional Record statement:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Centro Romero, a community-based organization that has been serving Salvadoran immigrants in the Chicago communities of Rogers Park, Edgewater, Ravenswood, and Uptown. Since its founding in 1984, Centro Romero has served Latino immigrant and refugee populations by providing services to adults and children to help them overcome barriers of integrating into U.S. society. Last year, Centro Romero served over 5,600 clients through its adult education, women's empowerment, youth learning and leadership and legal assistance programs.

Centro Romero was founded by a group of Salvadoran refugees living in Chicago who wanted to assist other incoming Central American refugees arriving in the United States to seek safe haven from the political and civil repression and human rights abuses that were plaguing the region during the 1970s and 1980s. Centro Romero is named in honor of Archbishop Oscar Romero, a Salvadoran Roman Catholic cleric, on behalf of his service of the poor and oppressed people. Archbishop Romero was assassinated in 1980 for his outspoken denunciations of the ruling elite and his defense of human and civil rights during El Salvador's civil war.

Centro Romero began its work in Chicago communities by providing basic services such as food, job placement, housing orientation and immigration procedures. Today, Centro Romero provides these services and has added a women's program and youth program to address additional needs in the growing Latino community.

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Today, in the House of Representatives, I would like to extend my congratulations and appreciation from the grateful communities of Chicago to the dedicated staff and volunteers of Centro Romero for their many contributions providing vital information and essential services for the Latino communities. All of us who live in the Chicago area are fortunate to have Centro Romero in our midst and we all benefit from its unparalleled

commitment to improving our community.